

The  
Early Years Count  
**Literacy**  
Connection



## Excellent Ed

Written by Stacey McAnulty  
Illustrated by Julia Sarcone-  
Roach

*Preschool edition*

### Overview of Book

All of the Ellis children seem to have a special talent. Their dog Ed has noticed that they each are excellent at something. Can Ed be excellent at something too? He tries to think of something—anything—where he can excel too. Finally, Ed learns that he has many excellent talents that all members of the Ellis family cherish.

Genre: Fiction

### Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *Excellent Ed* to introduce in your classroom:

|           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| excellent | except |
| earn      | prefer |
| agree     |        |

Each time you read the book, choose 2 or 3 words to highlight.

Use age-appropriate definitions and/or the illustrations to help children gain an understanding of each word's meaning.

Use these new words throughout the day, reminding the children, "That's a word from our story!"

### Connecting with the HighScope Curriculum

*COR Advantage 1.5*

Social and Emotional  
Development  
Item D (*Emotions*)

Language, Literacy and  
Communication  
Item N (*Phonological  
awareness*)

Creative Arts  
Item AA (*Pretend play*)

Social Studies  
Item FF (*Knowledge of self  
and others*)

### Reading Tips

When reading, notice the italics when Ed "talks" and use an "Ed" voice for these sections. Ed's body language changes as he moves through different emotions. As you read, reflect those emotions in your tone of voice and facial expressions (hopefulness, pride, disappointment and joy among others).

Three readings are recommended to familiarize children with the story. Each reading provides an opportunity to introduce new vocabulary words, pose open-ended questions, and engage children in activities that make the story "come alive."

At the end of each reading, display the book in the book area so children can read it on their own.

### **Throughout the Routine**

Refer to the book throughout the day and use new vocabulary words in meaningful ways. Active engagement with the story helps the content come alive.

Move like Ed at **Large Group Time**. Point out all the different ways that Ed rolls around at the beginning and ends of the book.

Bring props representing the Ellis children's talents for **Outside Time** (balls, baking pans/muffin tins, dance props and chalk).

Make a large map of the classroom for **Small Group**. Give each child a basket with objects from the various interest areas. Encourage the children to "put away" the objects so they don't get "lost"!

### **Around the Room**

Highlight the book's content and build on the children's excitement in a variety of locations.

Place realistic props related to Ed and the Ellis children's talents in the **House Area** (ballet items, dog dish, muffin tins).

Post words that have the same sound as the Ellis children in the **Writing Area**.

Begin with words from the story with the /eh/ sound—*Ed, Emily, excellent, Elmer, except* and *Ellis*. Then add other words with the /eh/ sound, such as elephant, elbow, Fred, head, lead, bed.

Take a poll and tally who says *ENvelope* or *ONvelope*. Both are correct!

### **Open-ended Questions**

Enhance active engagement and early critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions. These questions encourage children to explain why or how things happen, make predictions, or brainstorm possibilities rather than give one "right" answer.

Here are some questions you might ask for *Excellent Ed*:

What do you think Mr. and Mrs. Ellis are excellent at?

What are you excellent at?

Why did Ed want to be excellent at something?

What does it mean to be excellent at something?

*For more information on how to use books and stories with children to enhance your curriculum, contact*  
***The Family Connection:***

website—  
[www.famconn.org](http://www.famconn.org)

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### **@ Home**

Since many of the children in our county will have this book at home, use it as a way to further the home-school connection. In your daily contact—in person or by text, email or other notes home—encourage families to share *Excellent Ed* with their children. Here's a sample message you can send:

Everyone wants to feel special. *Excellent Ed*, by Stacey McAnulty, is a book all about being excellent at something. Notice the talents the children in the Ellis family have as you read this fun book with your child. Ed seems to notice their talents too. Wonder out loud, "What do you think Ed's going to do? What could his talent be?" Ask your child, "What are you excellent at?" Think with your child about other members in your family and what makes them special. Include your family pet if you have one!